

# AN ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH SERVICE NEEDS FOR THE NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH CAROLINA

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment identified available health-related services and the major barriers to obtaining adequate health care for Native Americans in North Carolina. The survey assessed methods used to reach Native Americans and the general population, the availability of data on ethnicity, perceived health service needs for Native Americans, and recommended strategies to overcome those needs.

The sample included the 20 counties that had 600 or more Native Americans according to the Census and/or a percentage of Native Americans greater than 1%. For data analyses, responses were examined for the individual variables. Frequencies and percentages of responses were computed for individual variables. Comparisons were made among the responses of the health departments, community health centers, and community-based organizations. This was done for the areas of the questionnaire addressing need for strategies to serve Native Americans.

The respondents were health educators at 20 local health departments and representatives of 7 community health centers and 24 community-based organizations. The community organizations included the 10 tribal organizations in the 20 counties, as well as other community agencies. Transportation was seen as a particular need for Native Americans by nearly all respondents. Similarly, the majority of health agencies and community organizations felt a need for more evening and weekend hours to better serve Native Americans. The location of health services was another area in need of improvement as identified by the majority of respondents. There was much perceived need for culturally appropriate materials for health education and much need for culturally appropriate care. Although most were doing some outreach using a variety of media, there was great perceived need for more outreach efforts.

Recommendations from this survey include the development of more:

- ♦ partnerships between local health departments and community organizations for providing services and mutual support, and for the development of culturally appropriate services;
- ♦ outreach to the Native American community to increase awareness of services available;
- ♦ accessible transportation systems or decentralized services;
- ♦ extended hours to improve access for this community; and
- ♦ advisory groups with Native American representation for input on health and human service needs.

A more extensive assessment would help obtain a better picture of the health service needs of this community. However, this preliminary assessment and the information in the literature can provide the basis for improving the health status of Native Americans in North Carolina.

N.C. DOCUMENTS  
CLEARINGHOUSE

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